

THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

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J. C. Spilman, Editor

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A COLONIAL COLLECTORS SOCIETY ?

During recent months your editor has received a number of personal letters expressing concern regarding the fragmented existence of Colonial collectors. These comments have ranged over a wide area of subjects, but three topics have been predominant. These are (1) expressions of dissatisfaction over the scarcity of Colonial material in the general numismatic publications, (2) the unwillingness - or inability - of dealers to attribute their Colonial material by die or plate variety, and (3) suggestions that a Colonial Collectors Society be established and that The Colonial Newsletter serve as its journal.

In 1963 when we took over the task of publishing CNL, our objective was to continue an existing medium of communication which seemed effective in promoting correspondence among those interested in Colonial American numismatics. There was no thought or interest in becoming the house organ for any group.

As time has passed, however, it has become clearly evident that there is a need for some concerted effort if the extremely small group of Colonial collectors is ever to establish a social standing within the numismatic fraternity. Accordingly, we suggest that our readers explore this concept by presenting their ideas and suggestions in these pages.

● IN THIS ISSUE ●

Part 1 of a highly speculative paper - Dies by Wyon - by Everett T. Sipsey. Here is an example of work of a preliminary research nature which may be considered by some to be entirely too speculative for publication. However, here it is - presented exactly as it is intended - An Exercise in Fact and Supposition. Here are new ideas to be shared and tested. This paper was privately circulated in August of 1964 to a group of nine interested individuals. It has subsequently been revised, and the first of two parts is presented in this issue.

• ALSO •

Walter Breen comments on Some Neglected Colonials, and presents new data on the billon Sous Marques authorized by Louis XV for circulation in the French Colonies in America.

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FUGIO 23-ZZ

23

ZZ



We are publishing in this issue the photographs and descriptions of Fugio 23-ZZ, a new reverse/obverse Club Ray Fugio variety which was discovered by Ted Craige in late 1963. Our sincere thanks to Ted for the opportunity of photographing and describing this specimen for the benefit of our readers.

This obverse, like # 2, has C instead of G in Fugio. The C punch is the same as that used for all the Club Ray obverses, then handcut on each die to convert the C into G. The diecutter's error of omission gives us this second FUCIO variety. On this specimen juxtaposition of dies is normal, $\uparrow\downarrow$. Weight is 159 grains. The obverse grades good to very good, and the reverse about fine.

The following descriptions prepared by your editor follow the general format established by Mr. Eric P. Newman.

OBVERSE 23

Club rays with concave ends. C instead of G in FUCIO. No ornamentation in MIND YOUR BUSINESS. D in MIND low and tilts right. O in YOUR is low but all letters evenly spaced. INE in BUSINESS progressively lower and tilt left; left side of I under right upright of D above. Period after FUCIO is partially under O. Club ray at 180° position is cut over club ray at 170° position. M $11\frac{1}{2}$: M $5\frac{1}{2}$: M 1 : H 1.

REVERSE ZZ

UNITED on left, STATES on right. W is low and widely spaced from E, and breaks into left upright of D. First E touches lower tip of first S. R almost directly over N, second E almost directly over third E. Third E breaks into base of E in STATES. O is low and tilts slightly right. Star in band under left side of left upright on N. Eight of the rings show recutting at outside. (Apparent ring defect to left of ONE in photograph is a planchet defect).

JCS



DIES BY WYON

● An Exercise in Fact and Supposition ●

by

Everett T. Sipsey

◆ Part 1 ◆

Immediately after the peace talks between the Americans and the British following the Revolutionary War, efforts were made by Robert Morris, the Financier of the Revolution, to create a "Mint of North America". According to well documented findings nothing ever came of these efforts except a few pattern pieces with NOVA CONSTELLATIO on the obverse and LIBERTAS-JUSTITIA on the reverse.

A large number of copper coins with the same legends and dated 1783 and 1785 were collected in later years. Investigators in the mid-1800's concluded that these were "made in Birmingham, in England, and the dies were cut by Wyon, of that place. They were manufactured by order of a gentleman from New York, who is believed to have been Gouverneur Morris". (1)

This die cutter was Thomas Wyon, Sr., who was in business with his brother Peter as General Die Engravers in Birmingham up to 1800. (2) A careful reading of Crosby (Reference 1) shows that all of the following coins were concluded to come from "dies by Wyon" because of a similarity of style, letter punches, or mulings. According to Crosby, the "Dies by Wyon" were the following:

1. NOVA CONSTELLATIO coppers
many dies 1783 and 1785
2. CONFEDERATIO coppers
two dies 1785
3. IMMUNE COLUMBIA 1785
4. INIMICA TYRANNUS AMERICA (1785 ?)

5. IMMUNIS COLUMBIA 1786
6. INIMICA TYRANNUS AMERICANA (1786?)
7. A New Jersey reverse (Maris -C) No Date
8. GEN. WASHINGTON (Maris-4) No Date
9. E PLURIBUS UNUM eagle 1786
10. New York EXCELSIORs four dies 1787

The writer has not studied the letter punches on this list but is copying Crosby, who is very accurate on these points, in stating they are all by the same person or company of persons; however, there is a very important exception in the above list. Mr. Walter Breen, acting on a report of Mr. Damon Douglas, has most definitely tied the EXCELSIORs to Ephraim Brasher and John Bailey. In fact, the list of dies and coins which Brasher and Bailey very likely made is, according to Mr. Breen's article (3), as follows:

1. Brasher Doubloons (and "half-doubloons") 1787
2. Brasher Lima-style Doubloons (1787?)
3. EXCELSIOR coppers 1787
(except Van Voorhis pattern)
4. NOVA EBORAC coppers 1787
5. A group of New Jersey coppers 1788
(Maris 74 to 78 and bb, cc, dd)

The writer would extend this list to include dies for the following:

6. The 1788 Connecticut coppers-- Miller dies 3, 4, 5, B, E
(all have quatrefoils) and 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, C, F, K, G.
(Made for Eli Leavenworth!?)
7. Two VERMONT (Ryder 13 and 27) and imitation British
half-pence for, it is believed, Machin Mills.
8. The group of New Jersey dies Maris 70, 71, 72, 73 and
x, y, z, aa. Also 34, 35, 40 and V, W, b.

All the above, except some of the New Jersey and Connecticut coins and those of the "counterfeitors", have quatrefoils in the legend. The others have six-point stars which are seen coupled with the quatrefoils on some Connecticut and NOVA EBORAC coppers. A few have mullets only.

Recently the writer made a careful comparison of the letter punches on the most common variety of NOVA CONSTELLATIO (1783 pointed rays, small U. S. --- Crosby 2-b) and on the most common variety of NOVA EBORAC (reverse seated figure facing right -- Crosby 1-A). The letters L, B, and E are identical on the two coins while V, R, I, and C appear to be the same except showing signs of wear on the latter coin. The O and T are definitely not the same while the A and N may be in this category. Of eleven letter punches three definitely and four possible are the same.

Could it be that Gouverneur Morris did not go to England for his NOVA CONSTELLATIO but called on Brasher and/or Bailey closer to home? Suppose that he did. Then we could say that the group under the listing of "Dies by Wyon" can actually be joined to the list under Bailey and Brasher. Then later day researchers would not have to be transporting certain dies across the Atlantic to account for some strange mulings. And other writers would not have to wonder how Thomas Jefferson's ideas for the CONFEDERATIO and INIMICA TYRANNUS AMERICANA coins could get in the hands of a firm in Birmingham when Jefferson, or any other member of the Federal government in New York, could easily travel from the Federal Building and be in a certain silversmith's shop. It would also eliminate the need to have Walter Mould bring E PLURIBUS UNUM shield dies from England, possibly before the design was chosen by (or "suggested" to) a Chief Justice of New Jersey. And, with lots of imagination, it might explain how a rejected, well worn IMMUNE COLUMBIA die could be muled with a die associated with a mint in Rupert, Vermont.

But there is a very serious problem to overcome. The workmanship on most of the "Dies by Wyon" is very good while an inspection of all the Brasher-Bailey coins show they were not up to the same caliber. It does not seem likely that Brasher or Bailey could have deteriorated so much in ability in four years.

To establish a baseline, let us examine the history of these men, Bailey Brasher, and their probable associate Halstead.

JOHN BAILEY was a cutler, therefore, a worker in iron; he made scissors and knives and was also a brass founder. There was a John Bailey who advertised as a silversmith and swordmaker in New York City in 1762. He advertised in the NEW YORK PACKET, May 14, 1778, when he moved from Fredicksburg to Fishkill, N. Y. Here he made the sword

that Washington used throughout the remainder of the Revolution. From Enscoe's Handbook (4) on Early Silversmiths--"John Bailey-worked as silversmith and swordmaker in N. Y. C. in 1762. Later advertised in Philadelphia in 1785". At the Historical Society of Pennsylvania they list "John Bailey-goldsmit-Cherry Alley between Third and Race Street 1783-1785". However, remembrances of his daughter did not include Philadelphia but a move direct to New York City, so there is doubt about the Philadelphia John Bailey being the same man. (5) In August 1785 he purchased property on Little Dock Street. In Frank's 1787 Directory of New York City he is listed as a member of the General Society of Merchants and Tradesmen and is not listed in the Gold and Silversmith Society. In 1787 he moved to 22 Queen St. In 1794 he seems to be the same John Bailey of 2 Little Dock Street who joined the firm of Bailey and Hedderly (New York Bell Foundry) which advertised they would cast bells. (6) In November 1798 he advertised as a brass founder at 60 Water Street and was making both iron and brass articles. It would appear that Bailey was a cutler all his life (having apprenticed in Sheffield, England) and that in his early days he handled silverware, probably as a side-line.

EPHRAIM BRASHER appears to have been a silversmith of New York City all his life but left during the British occupation from 1776 to 1783. In 1790 he lived next door to George Washington in Cherry Street. (7) In 1787 he (with Bailey) petitioned to make NOVA EBORACs and was a member of the Gold and Silversmith Society in New York. He was in New York City in 1784 (8) as attested by this interesting interesting ad which appeared in the Pennsylvania Packet, May 1, 1784.

EIGHT DOLLARS REWARD, Ran-away from the subscriber, a negro man named John Francis... by trade a goldsmith. Said negro was carried to New York and left in charge of Ephraim Brasher, goldsmith, from whom he absconded, and returned to me.....whoever takes up said negro and delivers him to John Letelier, goldsmith in Market Street, or to the subscriber in New York, shall have the above reward, and all reasonable charges paid.

Benjamin Halstead

Brasher was a member of New York's Evacuation Day committee in November 1783. (9) There are indications that he moved back to the city before that celebration.

(4) Ref. #4

(5) Ref. #5

(6) Ref. #6

(7) Ref. #7

(8) Ref. #8

(9) Ref. #9

BENJAMIN HALSTEAD was a goldsmith and received considerable government business from making silver trinkets, arm bands, neck plates, and the like for dealing with the Indians. Dates on Benjamin Halstead are: (10)

New York	1764-1766
Elizabeth	1766
? ? ?	1767-1783
Philadelphia	1783-1785
New York	1786-1806

The advertisement noted above would place him in New York in 1784. On September 3, 1785, an advertisement in the PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE stated he had just opened shop between Second and Third in Arch Street, Philadelphia. He worked at Maiden Lane and Nassau Street, New York, from 1786 to 1789.

Halstead appears to have had some business relationship with Ephraim Brasher during the period 1783-5 and Bailey definitely had one immediately after this period.

Vermont coins of 1785 are contemporary with the 1783 and 1785 Constellatio coins and appear to the writer to have almost identical device punches, which tends one's thinking toward an American source for the punches. This is discussed more fully toward the end of the next section of this paper which will appear in the next issue of THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER.



Dies by Wyon

Part 1 REFERENCES

#1 **EARLY COINS OF THE UNITED STATES,**
Sylvester S. Crosby, private printing,
Boston, 1875.

#2 **WYON'S MEMOIRS**
Nickolas Carlisle, Printed by R. Nichol,
London, 1837

#3 **BRASHER AND BAILEY,**
Walter Breen, A.N.S. Centennial Issue,
New York, 1958

#4 **AMERICAN SILVERSMITHS AND THEIR MARKS,**
Enscoe, Private printing, 1927

#5 **MEMOIR OF JOHN BAILEY,**
by Isaac J. Greenwood, 1864, in Manuscript Section,
New York Historical Society, N. Y. C. (hand-written)

#6 **ARTS AND CRAFTS OF NEW YORK 1777-1799,**
Rita S. Gottosman, New York Historical Society
Collections 1948.

#7 **UNITED STATES PATTERNS OF 1792,**
Walter Breen, Printed by Wayte Raymond, New York, 1954.

#8 **ARTS AND CRAFTS OF PHILADELPHIA, MARYLAND,
AND SOUTH CAROLINA.** A. C. Prime, Walpole Society, 1932

#9 **THE BRASHER DOUBLOON,**
by Vernon Brown, The Numismatist, June 1964.

10 **SILVERSMITHS OF NEW JERSEY,**
Carl M. Williams, McManus Publishing Co.,
Philadelphia, 1945.

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••••• SOME NEGLECTED COLONIALS •••••

by

Walter Breen

Collectors' attention should be called to several classes of coins really belonging with the American Colonial series but ordinarily not collected with them. They are to be listed in the forthcoming 19th edition of the Standard Catalogue of U. S. Coins, to be issued by Whitman Publishing Company sometime this winter.

Despite Crosby's cursory treatment of the "Gloriam Regni" series, everyone has become familiar with them as coins made for the French colonies in America: 40,000 pieces of 15 Sols and 200,000 of 5 Sols in silver. The only two successful large-scale attempts at providing an acceptable metallic currency in French America--Canada and Louisiana Territory, the boundaries between them being always extremely vague--have been almost entirely ignored, save for this writer's serial in Whitman Numismatic Journal.

The first of these was the "Mousquetaires" or "Old Sols". These are French billon pieces of 30 and 15 deniers, dated from 1709 to 1713 inclusive, and bearing mintmarks D (Lyon) or AA (Metz).

Obverse: Bears two roman L's back to back, crowned, with fleurs de lis at left and right, and below: LVD. XIII. FR. ET. NAV. REX. (date).

Reverse: Greek cross, voided (i.e. consisting only of an outline), fleurs de lis between the arms, three pellets at the end of each arm. PIECE DE XXX (or XV) DENIERS and mintmark.

I have been fortunate enough to locate three such pieces during the past year after intensive search, two of the large size, one of the small, and am trying to complete the set by dates and mintmarks. They circulated in quantity over here but by the late 1730's had gotten into short supply (billon coins wear down fast) and there were no more to be had from the home government in France.

As a result, Louis XV authorized the issue and circulation in the French colonies in America of billon Sous Marques from every French mint then in operation. The general appearance of these coins should be familiar either from Breton or the Whitman Standard Catalogue of Canadian Coins or from my Whitman Numismatic Journal serial.

I would like to take this opportunity to supplement the latter by listing by date and mintmark the sous and half sous known to me; there are quite a few now about which I did not know when I wrote the Whitman article. Usually that is what happens; publication of a pioneering kind stimulates hitherto unknown pieces to come from their hiding places.

SOUS:	1738.	Mintmarks A E P R S V X AA BB. May exist with mintmark F, Q. The Norweb piece with mintmark P, pictured in the Whitman Numismatic Journal serial, is a reeded edge piefort in good silver.
	1739/8.	W only.
	1739.	A B C D E G H U K L M O P R S T V W X Z AA BB Addorsed C's and 9.
	1740/39.	A and W only.
	1740.	A B D E G I K O P S T V X Z BB Addorsed C's and 9.
	1741.	A (counterfeits only) B C D G I R V W AA BB Addorsed C's and 9.
	1742.	A B E H K M P V W BB and 9.
	1743.	A T W and Cow.
	1744.	A W AA and BB.
	1745.	A and W only.
	1746.	A and E only.
	1747/6.	A only.
	1747.	H W and BB.
	1749, 50.	A and H only.
	1751.	A and C only; /BB coins are counterfeits.
	1752-55.	A only, including 1755/54.
	1756/46.	BB only. Also reported perfect date.
	1757-61.	A only.
	1762.	A and BB only.
	1763, 64/3 and 64.	A only.

HALF

SOUS:	1738.	A. Apparently unique.
	1739.	P. Apparently unique.
	1740.	A B D G I M P T V W X Y AA BB Addorsed C's and &. (& is the mark for Aix-en-Provence; I own the only specimen yet seen.)
	1748.	A only. Two known to me, Norweb collection and my own.
	1764.	A. Paris Mint collection only

After this the next large-scale attempt involved the well-known copper coins of 1767, the die varieties of which are being serialized in this newsletter. The author of the serial apparently is unaware that there were 1,600,000 minted. This figure comes from official records and is exact. The pieces without counterstamp are very seldom seen in choice condition, and those with counterstamp are properly coins intended for the West Indies and they circulated over here at juncture when almost anything of reasonable weight and copper or copper-containing metal would pass as a halfpenny.

— RESEARCH FORUM —

RF-17 A Connecticut Shilling. The specimen illustrated in the enlarged photograph reposes in the cabinet of Richard Picker. It was "purchased as a curiosity at some convention from some fellow who offered it as an obvious forgery". It appears to be of silver and is overstruck on its own undertype, inverted and rotated so that the obverse is overstruck on the reverse, etc. The cross on the crown of the undertype is seen between the N of NEW and the E of ENGLAND. Juxtaposition of the dies is $\uparrow\downarrow$. Weight is 78.5 grains. Minor diameter (measured across ENGLAND) is 25 mm; major diameter 26.5 mm. Average thickness .044". The date may be 1665 but it is difficult to determine the final digit with certainty.



2.2 dia.

As this piece is unquestionably struck from dies, other specimens may exist. Information relative to this specimen or others like it will be appreciated.

